

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>Abd Allah Ibn Saba Myth Exploded</u> > 2. Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming 'Abd Allah Al-Sabai

## 2. Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming 'Abd Allah Al-Sabai

There is only one report in the Sunni books mentioning a man named 'Abd Allah al-Sabai. This is the *riwayah* as documented by Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H):

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدي حدثنا هارون بن صالح عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبي الجلاس قال سمعت عليا يقول لعبدالله السبائي ويلك ما أفضي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بشيء كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعته يقول إن بين يدي الساعة ثلاثين كذابا وإنك أحدهم

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – **Harun b. Salih** – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – **Abu al-Jalas**:

I heard 'Ali saying to '**Abd Allah al-Sabai**: "Woe to you! The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard him (i.e. the Prophet) saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them." 1

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) has this verdict on it:

والحديث أخرجه أبو يعلى من طريقين آخرين عن الأسدى به

Its chain is *dha'if*. Abu al-Jalas Kufi is *majhul* (unknown), as stated in *al-Taqrib*. Harun b. Salih too is *majhul*. In *al-Taqrib*, he is called *mastur* (hidden).

And the hadith is recorded by Abu Ya'la through two other chains from al-Asadi with it.2

So, let us find out the other two chains recorded by Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H). This is the first:

حدثنا أبو كريب محمد بن العلاء حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدي حدثنا هارون بن صالح الهمداني عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبي الجلاس قال سمعت عليا يقول لعبد الله السبائي : ويلك ! والله ما أفضى إلى بشيء كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعته يقول : إن بين يدي الساعة ثلاثين كذابا وإنك لأحدهم

Abu Kurayb Muhammad b. al-'Ala – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – **Harun b. Salih al-Hamdani** – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – **Abu al-Jalas**:

I heard 'Ali saying to '**Abd Allah al-Sabai**: "Woe to you! I swear by Allah, he (i.e. the Prophet) did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard him (i.e. the Prophet) saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them."3

The annotator, Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is dha'if.4

What about the second? Abu Ya'la says:

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah narrated to us – Muhammad b. al-Hasan narrated the like of it to us with his chain.5

Apparently, this is the same chain from Ibn Abi Asim. Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah narrated it, and has identified "his chain" simply as – Harun b. Salih al–Hamdani – al–Harith b. 'Abd al–Rahman – Abu al–Jalas. It is indeed very strange that 'Allamah al–Albani refers to the chains in *Musnad Abu Ya'la* as "two *other* chains", even though the *isnad* of Ibn Abi Asim, and the two chains of Abu Ya'la, are all one and the same!

We know already that the report is unreliable. So, the alleged event never took place. Amir al-Muminin, 'alaihi al-salam, never said those words to any 'Abd Allah al-Sabai. But, there are still other issues we would like to address.

The *athar* does NOT mention "Abd Allah b. Saba". It only says "Abd Allah al-Sabai", which literally means "Abd Allah from the offspring of Saba". Obviously, 'Abd Allah b. Saba could rightly be also called

'Abd Allah al-Sabai. But, there were other 'Abd Allahs as well, from the same lineage of Saba, who were also known with that title. Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) tells us about one of them:

(وقعة النهروان)

وفيها سارت الخوارج لحرب علي، فكانت بينهم وقعة النهروان، وكان على الخوارج عبد الله بن وهب السبائي، فهزمهم على وقتل أكثرهم، وقتل ابن وهب.

The Incident of al-Nahrawan

In it, the Khawarij marched to fight a war against 'Ali. So, the Incident of al-Nahrawan was between them. The head of the Khawarij was '**Abd Allah b**. **Wahb** *al-Sabai*. 'Ali defeated them and killed most of them, and he killed Ibn Wahb.6

As such, "'Abd Allah al-Sabai" could well have been a reference to this Kharijite, or to some other "'Abd Allah" from the offspring of Saba!

However, there is some evidence that the "'Abd Allah al-Sabai" in the report of Abu Ya'la was actually 'Abd Allah b. Saba, and none else. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) copies:

وقال الحافظ أبو يعلى : حدثنا أبو كريب، حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدي، حدثنا هارون بن صالح الهمداني ، عن الحرص بن عبد الرحمن، عن أبي الجلاس قال : سمعت علياً يقول لعبد الله بن سبأ ، ويلك والله ما أفضي إليً بشيء كتمه أحداً من الناس ، ولقد سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : إن بين يدي الساعة ثلاثين كذاباً .

**Al-Hafiz Abu Ya'la said**: Abu Kurayb – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih al-Hamdani – al-Hars b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard 'Ali saying to '**Abd Allah b. Saba**: "Woe to you! I swear by Allah, he did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them." 7

Al-Hafiz too submits:

وقال أبو يعلي الموصلي في مسنده ثنا أبو كريب ثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدي ثنا هارون بن صالح عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبي الجلاس سمعت عليا يقول لعبد الله بن سبا والله ما أفضى إلي بشئ كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعت يقول إن بين يدي الساعة ثلاثين كذابا وانك لأحدهم

**Abu Ya'la al-Mawsili said in his** *Musnad*: Abu Kurayb – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard 'Ali saying to '**Abd Allah b. Saba**: "I swear by Allah, he did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard (him), saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them."8

Yet, even these facts do not help the Sunni claims, as all these reports have the same dha'if chain.

- 1. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 1, p. 462, # 982
- 2. Ibid
- 3. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 1, p. 349, # 449
- 4. Ibid
- 5. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 350, # 450
- 6. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [Dr. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam Tadmiri], vol. 3, p. 588
- 7. Abu al-Fida Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Nihayah fi al-Fitan wa al-Malahim (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: Prof. 'Abduh al-Shafi'i], vol. 1, p. 50. We had earlier very strongly criticized this rendition of the hadith by Ibn Kathir. However, upon further researches, we accept the possibility that he had only used a now extinct version of the book of Abu Ya'la. He has been corroborated by al-Hafiz.
- 8. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 3, p. 289-290, # 1225

Source URL: https://www.al-islam.org/fr/node/32630#comment-0